10 Steps Congress Can Take To Fix America

***by* RON PAUL | FITS NEWS | JANUARY 5, 2015**

Reversing the long, slow slide toward authoritarianism

Since New Year's is traditionally a time for resolutions, and since the new Congress convenes this week, I thought I would suggest some New Year's resolutions for Congress:

1) Bring the troops home — Congress should take the first, and most important, step toward ending our hyper-interventionist foreign policy by bringing our troops home and closing all overseas military facilities. The American people can no longer afford to bear the cost of empire.

2) Pass the Audit the Fed bill — The American people deserve to know the entire truth about how the Federal Reserve's monetary policy benefits big-spending politicians and financial elites while harming average Americans.

3) Repeal the PATRIOT Act and rein in the National Security Agency — It is approaching two years since Edward Snowden revealed the extent of the NSA's unconstitutional spying. Yet Congress still refuses to put a leash on the surveillance state. Congress should take the first step toward restoring respect for the Fourth Amendment by allowing Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act to expire.

4) Shut down the Transportation Security Administration — Treating all American air travelers as criminal suspects and subjecting them to intrusive and humiliating searches does nothing to enhance our security. Congress should shut down TSA and return responsibility for airline security to the airlines. Private businesses can effectively protect their customers and employees if the government gets out of the way.

5) End all corporate welfare — Federal programs that provide subsidies or other special benefits to

politically-connected businesses cause economic inequality, distort the market, and waste taxpayer money. It also makes political and moral sense to cut welfare for the rich before cutting welfare for the poor. Congress should start dismantling the corporate welfare state by killing the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Congress should also reject legislation proposed to benefit one industry or individual, such as Sheldon Adelson's Internet gambling ban.

6) Repeal and Replace Obamacare — Many Americans are losing their insurance while others are facing increasing health care costs because of Obamacare. Repealing Obamacare is only a first step. Congress should both repeal all federal policies that distort the health care market and restore a true free market in health care.

7) End police militarization — The killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in August brought the issue of police militarization to the center of national debate. Congress must end all federal programs that provide military equipment to local police forces.

8) Shut down the Department of Education — It is no coincidence that education in America has declined as federal control over education has increased. Congress should de-fund all federal education programs and return control over education to local communities and parents.

9) Allow individuals to opt out — A positive step toward restoring a free society would be allowing individuals to opt out of Obamacare and other federal mandates. Young people should also be granted the ability to opt out of paying Social Security and Medicare taxes in exchange for agreeing to never accept Social Security and Medicare benefits.

10) Allow state governments to opt out — If Congress lacks the votes to end the war on drugs, repeal Obamacare, or roll back other unconstitutional federal programs, it should at least respect the rights of states to set their own policies in these areas. Federal prohibition of state laws nullifying Obamacare or legalizing marijuana turns the Tenth Amendment upside down.

By adopting these resolutions, Congress can make 2015 the year America begins reversing the long, slow slide toward authoritarianism, empire, national bankruptcy, and economic decline.

Presidents Think They're Gods

***by* DAVID SWANSON | WAR IS A CRIME | JANUARY 5, 2015**

Presidents make wars. And they now do so without any formal checks on their power

A former Governor of Virginia is expected to be sentenced to a long stay in prison. The same fate has befallen governors in states across the United States, including in nearby Maryland, Tennessee, and West Virginia. A former governor of Illinois is in prison. Governors have been convicted of corruption in Rhode Island, Louisiana, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Connecticut, and (in a trumped-up partisan scam) in Alabama. The statewide trauma suffered by the people of states that have locked up their governors has been . . . well, nonexistent and unimaginable.

Locking U.S. presidents up for their crimes is a different story. Former President Richard Nixon's understanding that whatever a president does is legal has not been challenged since he made that comment. The *Washington Post* — not exactly a Nixon supporter — has the same understanding now. The *Post* recently justified the latest proposal to re-ban torture by explaining that even though torture was already banned, President George W. Bush tortured and therefore had found a legal way around the law. In other words, because he hasn't been prosecuted, what he did was legal.

The *New York Times,* which urged prosecuting former President George W. Bush for torture six years ago, recently wrote this:

> "Who should be held accountable? That will depend on what an investigation finds, and as hard as it is to imagine Mr. Obama having the political courage to order a new investigation, it is harder to imagine a criminal probe of the actions of a former president. But any credible investigation should include . . . "

The editorial goes on to list the people who should be prosecuted, up to and including the former vice president. But the president gets a pass, not on the basis of some reasoned argument, but because the authors cannot imagine a president being held accountable for crimes. They or their colleagues could imagine it several years ago but have progressed to the point where it has become unthinkable.

The state flag of Virginia, or any other of the 50 states, can be turned into a table cloth or a picnic blanket. It can be used to keep the rain off your firewood. Or it can be burned to get your fire started. Nobody cares what you do with it. Children aren't forced to pray to it every morning in school. It's just a flag. And because it's just a flag, nobody has any interest in abusing it, and virtually nobody would recognize what it was if they saw it burned or trampled or turned into a bathrobe or a bikini. The flag of

Virginia, although we don't actually imagine it as having feelings, is treated just fine. So are state songs, even though nobody is required to stand and sing them with a fascistic pose as troops march by.

The same is true of state governors. They're treated with civility and respect. They're honored when they perform well and held accountable when they abuse power. Understood as human beings, they aren't abused as anything less. But they are not gods. And they are not gods because they are not makers of war.

Presidents make wars. And they now do so without any formal checks on their power. They can destroy the earth with the push of a button. They can destroy a hut or a village or a city at their discretion. Their killer flying robots rain hell from the skies worldwide, and neither Congress nor the *Washington Post* nor the people who lock up governors for taking bribes can even imagine questioning that power, that privilege, that divine right.

Congress may, it is true, "authorize" one of the current wars for three more years after allowing it to proceed illegally for several months. Or it may not. Nobody cares. The pretense that it matters is a vestige of a time in which we saw presidents differently.

But if murdering large numbers of people doesn't disturb us, if we've all concluded that murder is morally superior to imprisonment and torture and that there is no third option, are we perhaps capable of spotting a problem in what presidents have become in relation to the rule of law? Should it not disturb us that we've given single individuals for 4- or 8-year runs more power than King George III ever dreamed of, and that we've collectively declared any declaration of independence unimaginable?

INFOWARS.COM

BECAUSE THERE'S A WAR ON FOR YOUR MIND